

Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Elder Update

January 2003

“Preparing today for everyone’s tomorrow”



MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

Executive Office of Elder Affairs
One Ashburton Place – 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02108



KERRY HEALEY
LT. GOVERNOR

GOV. ROMNEY NAMES JENNIFER DAVIS CAREY NEW SECRETARY OF ELDER AFFAIRS



Secretary Carey

Jennifer Davis Carey of **Worcester** is the new Secretary of Elder Affairs. Carey, 46, was serving as the Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation when then Governor-elect Mitt Romney tapped her to replace Lillian Glickman at Elder Affairs. “I’m confident she’ll be able to show the same passion and compassion she’s showed in the past,” Governor Mitt Romney said shortly before Carey was sworn in on January 3rd. Carey, who earned a PhD from Harvard, assumes command at a critical time. She will administer a \$330 million budget, including programs for Home Care, caregiving, health insurance counseling, prescription drug insurance, Supportive Housing, and many others upon which elders and families have come to rely. At Consumer Affairs, Carey built a reputation as a strong advocate for consumers and a champion of coordinating policy, planning and personnel for nine state agencies. Carey worked previously as a Special Assistant to Governor Paul Cellucci overseeing constituent services and external relations. She also was one of the signatories to the 2001 Report on Long Term Care produced by the Swift Administration. Romney personally notified Glickman of his decision, and Glickman then met with Carey to facilitate the transition process. Glickman, whose career in the Massachusetts elder network began in 1969 and culminated when Governor Cellucci appointed her to the Cabinet in 1998, asked all members of the elder network to welcome and support her successor.

SURVEY SHOWS WIDE SATISFACTION WITH PRESCRIPTION ADVANTAGE

Nearly 75 percent of Prescription Advantage members indicated that they are "satisfied" with their state-sponsored prescription drug program, and nearly eight in ten members would recommend the plan to a friend, according to a new survey conducted by KRC Research and Consulting. The survey found that Prescription Advantage compares favorably among members and non-members to more established providers such as Harvard, Tufts, Fallon, and Blue Cross Blue Shield. In a nod to how the program might be marketed in the future, respondents indicated that accessibility for all people regardless of health or financial status was among the program's most important attributes, along with its cost-saving mail order option. The Commonwealth's connection to Prescription Advantage as its founder and administrator also ranked high on the list of attributes. Also encouraging was the finding that nearly one-third of the general population in Massachusetts has heard of Prescription Advantage, mostly through television (66 percent), newspapers (32 percent), and radio (15 percent). The program launched in April 2001 and now has 80,000 members. "Prescription Advantage is seen as a solid program that receives good ratings from members and non-members alike," the report concluded. "The reputation of the program remains high." For more information, call Derrek Shulman at Elder Affairs: (617) 222-7460.

PRESCRIPTION ADVANTAGE MEMBERS CAN AVOID \$1.30 USER-FEE BY OPTING FOR MAIL ORDER SERVICE

A new law implemented this month by the Massachusetts Division of Health Care Finance and Policy requires Prescription Advantage members to pay an additional \$1.30 per retail prescription. However, this new pharmacy "user-fee" does not apply to Prescription Advantage members who take advantage of the prescription drug insurance plan's mail order service. For more information, call Prescription Advantage Customer Service toll-free: 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4363) or TDD/TTY: 1-877-610-0241.

HOME CARE SPARED FROM SECOND ROUND OF CUTS

The state Home Care Program, which saves the Commonwealth money by preventing Massachusetts elders from requiring more expensive nursing home placement, was saved from the last round of state budget cuts called for by former Governor Swift. The \$130 million statewide Home Care Program provides services for low-income elders who, because of functional limitations, need support with activities of daily living, such as housecleaning, health care, grocery shopping, meal preparation, and transportation to medical appointments, to remain safely in their homes. The Governor's "9C" emergency cuts, necessitated by the sliding economy and the constitutional responsibility to balance the budget, did not produce any additional negative impact on Elder Affairs' \$330 million budget.

SENIOR ACTION PLAN EASES POST-HOLIDAY STRESS

The Eldercare Locator, a nationwide, government funded directory assistance service that provides elders and families with access to information about senior services, has launched a "Home for the Holidays Senior Action Plan." The Eldercare Locator traditionally sees a spike in the number of calls it receives from people in need of senior care following the holiday season. The Locator encourages Americans to look for warning signs that their older relative may need assistance by utilizing the newly released "Home for the Holidays Warning Signs Guide," which is part of the five-point action plan. Many older adults will show signs of stress from feeling isolated and lonely as the holidays come to an end and they return home to their routine life away from their families. The holidays may also be a period when families discuss the difficult decisions about the care of an older relative, and seek help on where to find qualified providers. Over the past five years, the average number of calls to the Eldercare Locator has increased by 25 percent in December and January. The Eldercare Locator can be accessed through its toll-free telephone line, 1-800-677-1116, or its Web site: www.eldercare.gov.

RESPECTED ELDER ADVOCATE FROM MARBLEHEAD SET TO JOIN AGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Peggy Munro of **Marblehead** has been appointed to the Citizens Advisory Committee to Elder Affairs (CAC). Munro, a well-respected advocate for elders, recently retired from her long-held post as the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council for Home Care Aide Services. Munro will be sworn in as the newest CAC member at the body's January 14th meeting. Munro will join 47 fellow CAC members from across the Commonwealth to advise the Governor, through the new Secretary, on policy matters and other issues affecting the more than 1.1 million elders and families in Massachusetts. At recent quarterly meeting, CAC members have focused discussion on prescription drugs, housing, long-term care and caregiving.

TELEMARKETERS WON'T RING IN NEW YEAR WITH ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR UNWANTED CALLS

The Commonwealth's new telemarketing law allows consumers to reduce (but not eliminate) the number of unwanted telemarketing calls they receive by signing up on the Do Not Call Registry. Consumers now can sign up on www.mass.gov/donotcall or at a toll-free telephone number that will become available in April, 2003. Consumers also will be able to get information about their rights under the law at the web site. "We expect this program to be so popular we are preparing to take up to a million registrations in the first month," said Secretary Carey, who led the implementation of the elder-friendly law while serving in her capacity as Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation. "Consumers will be able to register seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day with the automated phone and web registration systems we are creating." People who sign up may still receive calls from nonprofit organizations, political organizations, businesses that have a prior relationship with them and solicitors that don't intend to complete a sale over the phone. The law also bars telemarketers from sending unsolicited faxes, and from using devices that disable caller ID displays, forbids calls before 8 a.m. or after 8 p.m., and requires telemarketers to immediately identify themselves. The law requires new disclosures from telemarketers about exactly who is selling the goods or services marketed and detailed information about the terms of the purchase. The enforcement provision of the law allows consumers to sue telemarketers who violate the law or to report them to the Office of the Attorney General. For more information, call the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation: 1-888-283-3757.

ELDERS CAN WARM-UP THEIR WINTER BY TAKING HEED OF COMMON-SENSE TIPS

Elder Affairs again has issued common-sense tips to help elders stay warm this winter and keep their home heating bills down. The action plan includes an outreach campaign targeting Councils on Aging, Aging Services Access Points, and many other elder advocacy organizations around the Commonwealth. "The goal of this campaign is to remind people that when the mercury in the thermometer goes down, the home heating bills are sure to go up," Secretary Jennifer Davis Carey said. "The best defense is to familiarize oneself with as many of these tips as possible." Tips include lowering the thermostat when at work or asleep, keeping drapes and curtains closed at night, and insulating attics and basements. In related news, the state Division of Energy Resources continues to operate its toll-free home heating assistance hotline, 1-866-ENERGY-7, and its website www.winterheating.com. For a copy of the tips, contact Derrek Shulman at Elder Affairs: (617) 222-7494.

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3 AT ELDER AFFAIRS MOVE ON

Three valued employees at Elder Affairs have recently announced their plans to leave the agency. David Morales of **Lynn**, the Executive Director of Prescription Advantage since 2001, has taken a position with Senator Robert Travaglini (D-**East Boston**), who became State Senate President in January 2003. Morales was instrumental in the implementation and growth of Prescription Advantage, the nation's first prescription drug insurance plan for elders and younger people with disabilities. Under Morales' leadership, more than 80,000 people received prescription drug insurance coverage. Diane Applegate of **Melrose**, Elder Affairs' Legislative Liaison since 2000, has pursued a private sector opportunity in public and government relations. Applegate managed the 2001 Governor's Conference on Aging and helped to coordinate the highly successful 2002 Older Worker Job Fair, among many other achievements. Adam Kramer of **Newton**, Elder Affairs' Assistant Director of Communications and Government Relations since 1998, is moving back to his hometown of Albany, New York, where he is pursuing a position in public affairs. Kramer served as a principal spokesman for the agency and was a major contributor to this publication.

ROUND-UP FROM THE ELDER NETWORK

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services has issued new regulations to toughen the Commonwealth's Criminal Offender Records Investigation (CORI) system. State law requires entities to obtain CORI checks on individuals before they can volunteer, be employed or be referred for employment in any entity providing services to elderly person in their homes or in a community setting. For more information, contact Joel Semuels at Elder Affairs: (617) 222-7461. Congratulations to Pauline Hogan of **Littleton**, who recently earned the prestigious AARP Andrus Award for Community Service. Elder Affairs regrets that despite overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants and observers, it has been forced to suspend its elder art exhibit due to budgetary and staffing shortages.

VITAL NUMBERS

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|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Elder Affairs: | 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636) |
| TDD/TTY: | 1-800-872-0166 |
| Fax: | 1-617-727-9368 |
| Elder Abuse Hotline w/TTY: | 1-800-922-2275 |

ELDER SERVICES ONLINE

Click on www.800ageinfo.com for the latest information on programs, services, resources and related links available to Massachusetts elders and their families.

*The success of this monthly publication depends on you. Please share your ideas and feedback with the editor, Derrek Shulman:
(617) 222-7460.*